Finally the flames caught in Switzerland, where the democratic district of Vaud declared its independence of the Bernese aristocracy. The fire was fanned by Bonaparte's agent, Peter Ochs, the liberal burgomaster of Basel. France intervened, nominally in order to compel Bern to liberate all her political prisoners and to emancipate Vaud, but really to plunder and remodel the whole country. The entering army pillaged friend and foe alike. The desperate resistance of Bern, in which even women and children shared, was of no avail. At its close the Helvetian Republic was constituted under a new charter, like those of Cisalpina and Batavia; it likewise entered at once into an offensive and defensive alliance with France. Bern's indemnity was the surrender of her "treasure/' or cash reserve—a sum of one million three hundred thousand dollars. Swiss historians state that besides the cash there were nearly two and a half million dollars in bonds. A fifth of this was sent at once to Toulon, where the fleet was fitting out; the rest went to the army and its commander, General Brune. Fribourg, Solothurn, and Zurich were likewise stripped for the benefit of the military chest. It is thought that from all the enormous sums seized during the winter nothing reached the national treasury. Napoleon in exile declared that Paris knew nothing of all this. But more serious still were the contemplated changes of territory. The Valtellina had already been incorporated with the Cisalpine Republic; the Frick valley was soon to be delivered to Austria along with the Inn Quarter; and eventually Geneva, with the upper Rhone valley, was to become a part of France itself, in order that the Simplon, another gateway into Italy, might be assured to her armies in case the difficult passes on the Mediterranean shore should ever be closed.1

1 See Dandliker: Geschichte der Schweiz, Vol. Ill, p. 350.